



MARCH 1, 1956



1026 17th STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

WHEN WILL D. C. GET HOME RULE?

Local solution of local problems is one of the keystones of government in the United States. Yet the ninth largest city in the nation is not allowed to govern itself.

Eighty-two years ago Congress "temporarily" took over Washington's local government during a municipal debt crisis, and to this day Congress continues to serve as the city council for the District of Columbia.

People who live in Washington, like people who live in other cities, want to have better schools, provide needed municipal improvements, solve public transportation problems, and do all the things that could make their city a better place to live.

Three times since 1947, bills to give Washingtonians local franchise have been passed by the Senate. In 1948 a bill reached the floor of the House but did not come to a final vote. In 1952 a petition to bring a Senate-passed home rule bill out of the House District Committee was started so late in the term that it failed to be signed by the necessary 218 members.

The Present Bill

Last June the Senate again passed a home rule bill, S. 669, which would exchange the appointed District Commissioners, who now head the local government, for an elected mayor and council, but continue to reserve to Congress its constitutional right to legislate on any matter. Nine councilmen would be nominated by wards but elected at large. The mayor, school board, and a non-voting Delegate to the House would be elected. The bill calls for a referendum to be held before its provisions go into effect.

The House District Committee, headed by Rep. McMillan (D., S.C.), has made no move to advance the

bill. On February 21 Rep. Staggers (D., W. Va.) filed a discharge petition. If 218 members of the House sign this petition, the bill will be sent straight to the floor for debate, bypassing the House Rules Committee. Extremely few bills have become laws via the discharge petition route.

Will 218 sign? At the moment no one knows. **It depends on many factors, not the least of which is whether citizens all over the country let their Representatives know of their support of home rule for the District of Columbia.**

President Eisenhower has stated his support for local government for the District. Both the Republican and Democratic parties have endorsed the principle in their platforms.

Congress Is City Council

The impracticability of the present D. C. system was pointed up last summer during a transit strike when Congress found itself trying to settle the wages of streetcar conductors. The length of the strike—52 days—was due in large part to the inability of the Commissioners to act and the cumbersome job of getting Congress to do so.

Voteless Washington, with a population of more than 853,000, pays almost \$1 billion in federal taxes annually, yet has little say in expenditure of this money. Washingtonians pay \$112 million in municipal taxes and carry 85 per cent of the cost of running the nation's Capital. Local taxes have risen steadily during the past 10 years. They will go up again this year.

There is no formula to which Congress is committed for contributing a "fair share" to the District's expenses, although the District furnishes many services to the federal

government—water, police, park, etc. Until 1921, the federal government paid half the cost of the city's government, as it agreed to do when it took away local option. One year since then the federal payment was as low as eight per cent of the District budget. Two years ago, after authorizing a program of redevelopment, Congress contributed \$20 million. Last year it slipped back to \$18 million. Home rule supporters say that regardless of the form of government, Congress will cut or raise the payment only to the extent that it recognizes the political desirability of maintaining the Capital in adequate fashion.

Why the Opposition?

Opponents of District home rule say that it is unconstitutional, and that appointed government is "cleaner." Not said much aloud, but a potent factor in the opposition, is the fear that Washington's sizable and growing Negro population might control a home rule government.

Home rule advocates say that the constitutional argument was disposed of by the Supreme Court when, in 1953, it held valid an act of the District's territorial legislature in 1873 and said that the Constitution "would seem" to let Congress give the District as much self-government as it gives the territories of Hawaii and Alaska. Both run their own affairs.

Home rulers point to other border cities with similar racial population where the franchise operates successfully. The "clean appointive government" argument points up an alarming apathy which develops among people who have no control over their civic affairs. Frustration finally leads them to accept the "let George do it" attitude, so dangerous to our American way of life.

National Nominees for League Office

The Nominating Committee will present to the national Convention the names listed below as nominees for officers and directors and for chairman of the Nominating Committee for the term 1956-1958. Immediately following the presentation of these names to the Convention, nominations may be made from the floor.

President	Mrs. John G. Lee	Connecticut
1st Vice President	Mrs. Harold D. Dyke	New York
2nd Vice President	Mrs. John F. Latimer	District of Columbia
Secretary	Mrs. Donald F. Bishop	Pennsylvania
Treasurer	Mrs. Carl Marcy	Virginia
Directors	Mrs. Werner J. Blanchard	Ohio
	Mrs. Alf H. Gundersen	Wisconsin
	Mrs. Tor Hylbom	Colorado
	Mrs. Walter H. C. Laves	Indiana
	Mrs. Oscar M. Ruebhausen	New York
	Mrs. Arthur E. Whittemore	Massachusetts
Chairman of Nominating Committee	Mrs. F. W. Hopkins	New Jersey

Seven of the above are incumbent and their biographies appeared in THE NATIONAL VOTER of November 15, 1955; brief facts about the other five are presented herein.



Mrs. Donald F. Bishop—

Joined League in Philadelphia, where she still lives, served as Board member, treasurer, and then as president for four years, during which time League helped to win Home Rule Charter for the city . . . president of Pennsylvania League 1951-55, still member state Board . . . occupational therapist by profession . . . currently a member of board of directors of World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, vice chairman of Citizens Charter Committee, member of board and chairman of Public Affairs of Metropolitan Philadelphia YWCA and member Bulletin Forum Advisory Committee . . . husband is an investment counselor . . . two grown daughters.

Mrs. Carl Marcy—Joined in 1944 when Arlington-Alexandria League was being organized . . . served as Board member of that League, then became president of Arlington League . . . next was member of Virginia state Board and for past two years has been president of state League . . . served with Social Science Research Council in Washington on civil-military relations . . . husband is staff chief of U. S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, is lawyer and author of articles on foreign relations . . . teen-age daughter and a son.



Mrs. Tor Hylbom—

Joined in 1936 in Colorado Springs where she still lives . . . president local League four years . . . became member state Board in 1947, was state president 1951-54 . . . has represented League on U. S. National Commission for UNESCO since 1954, in 1955 was elected alternate

member of Executive Committee . . . has taught German and Latin and been music and drama critic for newspaper . . . activities have included Women's Educational Society of Colorado College, Governor's General Committee on School Finance, Mayor's Committee for U.N. Day . . . husband is retired musician and teacher . . . two daughters and a son.

Mrs. Arthur E. Whittemore—

Joined when the League was organized in 1932 in Hingham, still her home . . . local League president two years . . . member state Board continuously since 1939, president Massachusetts League 1942-45 . . . has served as chairman of board of a nursery school, board member of Parents' Association of Derby Academy in Hingham, member of a Massachusetts Minimum Wage Board, president of auxiliary of a large Boston hospital, chairman of the Women's Committee for CARE . . . husband is lawyer, appointed in 1955 a Justice of Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts . . . three children, two grandchildren.



Mrs. F. W. Hopkins—

Joined in New Jersey where she was charter member and president of New Brunswick League . . . served as state president four years . . . national treasurer of League from 1952 to 1954 . . . civic activities have included membership on the Judicial Conference for New Jersey and the Governor's Committee on Local Health Administration, and the vice presidency of the New Jersey Citizens' Tax Study Foundation . . . now lives in Highland Park . . . husband is chairman of Department of Economics and Sociology at Rutgers University.

★ CONGRESSIONAL ★ SPOTLIGHT

BRICKER AMENDMENT: The Senate Judiciary Committee plans to consider **S. J. Res. 1†**, proposed constitutional amendment to limit the President's treaty-making power, March 5. The Senate is under great pressure to take some action on this amendment. A new wording has been proposed and may be brought to the floor without hearings. Requests that hearings be held should be addressed to members of the Senate.

TRADE: The House Ways and Means Committee begins a series of hearings on **H. R. 5550**, to authorize U. S. participation in the Organization for Trade Cooperation, March 1.

U.N. SPECIALIZED AGENCIES: The Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements of the House Foreign Affairs Committee is holding a series of hearings to evaluate U. S. participation and effectiveness in the 10 U.N. specialized agencies, to determine whether or not participation is in the best interests of the United States. The League has asked to make a statement in support of U. S. participation.

FEDERAL ELECTIONS: S. 636, now pending in the Senate, proposes revision of the Corrupt Practices Act to set new, more realistic limits on spending by and for candidates in primary and general election campaigns.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT: S. J. Res. 31, now pending on the Senate Calendar, is a proposed constitutional amendment abolishing the electoral college and dividing the electoral votes within each state in direct proportion to the popular vote.

LOBBYING INVESTIGATION: The Senate created a special committee Feb. 22 to investigate improper pressures on members of Congress, candidates, and members of the executive branch through campaign contributions, political activities, lobbying or other activities. The committee, to report Jan. 31, 1957, will make recommendations for improving the federal election laws, the Federal Corrupt Practices Act, the Regulation of Lobbying Act and related laws.

† Indicates League opposition.

THE NATIONAL VOTER

Vol. V MARCH 1, 1956 No. 15

Published monthly by the League of Women Voters of the U. S., with additional issues in February, March, April and June.

1026 17th Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

MRS. JOHN G. LEE, President
DOROTHY FELKER GIRTON, Editor
Entered as second-class matter, April 9, 1951, at the Post Office, Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1879.
Subscriptions: \$1.00 per year.